period. Prior to that there was no export from India of semi-processed hides and skins.

White Paper on quantitative restrictions under WTO

4122. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to release a 'White Paper' on the quantitative restrictions on the items under the WTO to dispel notions and misgivings;

(b) if so, when such paper is going to be released; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) India has been following a continuous policy of removal of restrictions on imports since 1991. Tariff line-wise import policy was first announced on 31.3.1996. As on that date, import of 6161 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) out of the total number of 10202 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) were free. Import restrictions on 488 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) were removed during the period 1.4.96 to 31.3.97. Another 391 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed during the period 1.4.97 to 13.4.98 and 894 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed on 1.4.99. Quantitative restrictions on 714 items were removed on 31.03.2000 and import restrictions on the balance 715 items however removed on 31.03.2001.

Since this issue has been widely debated and since this is not a new development there does not seem to be any need for a 'White Paper' on the subject.

Memorandum received from Rubber Footwear Manufacturers

4123. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum from All India Federation of Rubber Footwear Manufacturers for their long standing demand; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demands raised in the Memorandum received from the All India Federation of Rubber Footwear Manufacturers were considered but it has not been found feasible by the Government to agree to the same.

Impact of new EXIM Policy on domestic industry

4124. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the extent to which the EXIM Policy 2001-2002 is likely to affect the domestic producers and farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): The EXIM Policy aims to enhance the technological strength and efficiency of Indian agriculture and industry thereby improving their competitive strength. With a view to promote interest of farmers, a separate scheme of "Agricultural Exports Zone" has been incorporated in the EXIM Policy, 2001-2002 for end to end development and export of specific agriculture products from a geographically contiguous area.

Certain doubts have been expressed regarding its adverse impact on domestic producers and farmers in post QR regime. However, since adequate safeguards are available to protect farmers and domestic industry in the wake of removal of QR and imports of sensitive items are monitored very closely, domestic industry and farmers would not be adversely affected.